(d) the steps being proposed by the Government to improve the situation of these workers?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[Translation]

Development of Railways

2955. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRI MAHENDRA SINGH BHATI :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have formulated any new scheme for the development of Railways and to provide more facilities to the passengers;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which this scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(d) the number of passengers likely to be benefited under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) to (d) Development of Railway stations to provide more facilities to the passengers is a continuous process. Facilities at stations are upgraded depending on the growth and requirement of passenger traffic handled at that station. At present there is no new scheme.

Availability of Rail Engines

2956. SHRI DATTA MEGHE : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are sufficient rail engines in the country which are in good condition;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the new electric engines are being used in place of old coal engines;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the number of coal engines replaced by the electric engines so far during this year alongwith the number of new engines built during the above period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As no 1.4.96. there were 2387 electric locos, 4313 diesel locos & 209 steam locos on Indian Railways.

(c) and (d) The electric engines are used in the sections which are electrified.

(e) No electric loco has replaced steam loco during this year. For 1996-97, 195 electric locos and 150 diesel electric locos have been planned for production/procurement.

Sponge Iron Units

2957. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
SHRI NAWAL KISHORE RAI :

Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Tough time ahead for sponge iron units" appearing in *'Tribune'* dated December 27, 1996;

(b) if so, whether the manufactures of sponge iron of the country have to face the problem due to the shortage of good quality coal and increase in the price of coal;

(c) if not, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(d) whether the representatives of the industry have drawn the Government attention to it; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (d) The attention of the Government has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Tough time ahead for sponge iron units" appearing in *"Tribune"* dated December 27, 1996. Sponge Iron Manufacturers Association have also expressed their concern about inadequate availability of required grades of non coking coal and increase in the price of coal.

(e) To increase the availability of coal, the Coal Mines Nationalisation Act, 1973 has been amended w.e.f. 9.6.1993 to allow development of captive mines by iron & steel manufacturers. This amendment also allows setting up of washeries for washing coal obtained from a mine. Further, the Government have proposed reduction of the basic custom duty on non coking coal from 20% to 10% in the Budget for 1997-98.

[English]

Selling of Scrap

2958. SHRI KACHARU BHAU RAUT : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the quantum of scrap sold by Railways during the current year so far; and

(b) The income earned therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The quantum of scrap sold by the Railways during the current financial year upto January '97 is given below:

(1)	Rails & Ferrous Scrap (MTs).	5,54,173
(2)	Non-Ferrous Scrap (MTs)	5,222
(3)	Coaches (Units)	1.671
(4)	Locos (Units)	98
(5)	Wagons (Units)	13,979
(6)	Miscellaneous Scrap (MTs)	8,133

(b) The amount earned thereform was Rs. 606.68 crore.

Setting up of Alumina Plant in Orissa

2959. SHRI BHAGWAN SHANKAR RAWAT: Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to set up Alumina plants during the year 1997-98 in Uttar Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof, location-wise;

(c) whether any company has show interest in this work; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) The Government has no proposal to set up Alumina Plants in the Public Sector in the State of Uttar Pradesh during the year 1997-98.

(c) and (d) To encourage Private Sector investment in the Aluminium Sector, Aluminium Metal and its downstream products have been exempted from the provision of compulsory licencing.

[Translation]

Waiting List for Telephones

2960. SHRI THAWAR CHAND GEHLOT : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the targets fixed for providing telephone connections in the country during 1994-95, 1995-96 and 1996-97, State-wise; and

(b) the number of telephone connections provided as against the above targets by January 31, 1997, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) The details are given the enclosed Statement.

Statement

Sl. No.	State	1994-95 Target	1994-95 Telephone Connections Provided	1995-96 Target	1995-96 Telephone Connections Provided	1996-97 Target	1996-97 Telephone Connections Provided (as on 31-1-97)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Andhra Pradesh	82000	138278	148500	150021	123000	107494
2.	Assam	10000	13103	14600	20295	18000	10963
3.	Bihar	35000	44068	69300	33115	47000	25094
4.	Gujarat (including Dadar, Diu, Daman & Nagar Haveli)	80500	122507	163100	134832	188000	93187
5.	Haryana	22000	47008	64900	52486	64000	27765
6.	H.P.	12000	21349	35300	30212	27000	22745
7.	J & K	4000	4983	9300	5988	23000	8459
8.	Karnataka	79000	136008	168200	139694	133000	90051
9.	Kerala (including Lakshadweep(UT)	79000	90460	326300	154033	228000	106094